

Session Topic Descriptions
2005 National NOAA Stakeholder Forum
“Working with Partners to Serve Society”

Washington, DC
March 2, 2005

Morning Breakout Sessions: NOAA’s Mission Goals

- *Protect, Restore, and Manage the use of Coastal and Ocean Resources Through an Ecosystem Approach to Management*

NOAA has a unique mandate from Congress to be a lead Federal agency in protecting, managing, and restoring marine resources, ranging from recreational and commercial fisheries to sensitive habitat areas. Conservation, protection, management, and restoration of living marine resources and coastal and ocean resources are critical to the U.S. economy. To achieve balance among ecological, environmental, and social influences, we must work together to integrate the concerns, priorities, and expertise of all citizens and sectors in the management of these resources.

- *Understand Climate Variability and Change to Enhance Society’s Ability to Plan and Respond*

Climate shapes the environment, natural resources, economies, and social systems that people depend upon worldwide. NOAA’s climate information, products, and services enable society to understand and respond to changing climate conditions. Yet, to help minimize risks and maximize opportunities in agriculture, public policy, natural resources, water and energy use, and public health, we must seek ways to work together with our partners to accelerate the development of information to support climate policy decisions and plans.

- *Serve Society’s Needs for Weather and Water Information*

Weather is directly linked to public safety and nearly one-third of the U.S. economy is sensitive to weather and climate. Because of this importance, we must continue to seek better ways to provide decision makers with key observations, analyses, predictions, and warnings relating to weather, water supply, air quality, and space weather. By working closely with existing partners and developing new partnerships, we hope to expand our services to support evolving national needs.

- *Support the Nation’s Commerce with Information for Safe, Efficient, and Environmentally Sound Transportation*

Safe and efficient transportation systems are crucial to the U.S. economy. Improving the accuracy of our information for marine, aviation, and surface weather forecasts, the availability of accurate and advanced electronic navigational charts, the delivery of timely positioning information, the efficiency of our responses to hazardous spills, and the effectiveness of search and rescue are all priorities for NOAA. We must address these through partnerships with those in the private sector and among agencies at all levels.

Afternoon Breakout Sessions: Cross-Cutting Themes

- *Integrating Global Environmental Observations and Data Management*

NOAA depends upon observing systems for virtually every activity the agency does, from fundamental research to long-range operational forecasting to day-to-day regulatory decisions. Many of these observing systems, however, were built for single purposes and consist of limited numbers of sensors connected to different networks with different formats and different dissemination methods. With an increasing and increasingly complex human population, it is critical that we work together in partnerships at all levels to improve our current, limited understanding of the complex and interconnected systems of our planet and, in so doing, help sustain the balance between economic development and wise use of our limited natural resources.

- *Ensuring Sound, State-of-the-Art Research*

To fulfill NOAA's responsibilities for regulatory, operational, and information services, we must direct and maintain a vigorous and forward-looking research enterprise that includes a healthy academic component. A strong economic and social science capability is needed to analyze and understand evolving user needs and priorities and long-term visionary research is required to recognize emerging issues and to manage future environmental, ecological, and societal needs. Partnerships must play a significant role in achieving these research goals and creating a seamless end-to-end delivery of services, products, and information.

- *Promoting Environmental Literacy*

NOAA has a responsibility to improve public understanding of the planet's dynamic air and water systems and the effects those systems have on all aspects of people's lives. If we are to educate and inform present and future generations about the changing Earth and its processes, to inspire youth to pursue scientific and technical careers, and to improve the public's awareness, understanding, and use of NOAA products and services, we must work closely with our partners in educational institutions, governmental agencies, and private industry to build environmental literacy.